

[NORTHFIELD SELECT BOARD MEETING MINUTES]

September 5, 2023

Northfield Town Hall
69 Main St

Select Board Present: Alexander Meisner, Chair; Bernard Boudreau, Vice Chair; Sarah Kerns (joined at 6:06 pm), Clerk; Barbara “Bee” Jacque; Heath Cummings

Also Present: Andrea Llamas, Town Administrator; Sandra L. Wood, Town Secretary; Tyler Bourbeau, BNCTV

Others Present: Chief Jon Hall; Christopher Miner; Chris Seller, Brewery at Four Star Farm

- Meeting called to order at 6:03 pm
- **Scheduled Appointments**
 - Police Officer Appointment- Christopher Miner
 - Miner has previously worked for the Town of Northfield and is looking forward to working with Chief Hall
 - Holds a Bachelors Degree from Westfield State
 - Enjoys outdoor recreation
 - Miner was encouraged to find interests outside the field to find a balance
 - Chief Hall announced Sergeant Pirozhkov will be leaving to attend the State Police Academy creating another opening in the department
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to appoint Christopher Miner to the position of police officer for the Northfield Police Department immediately at \$26.65/hour, grade 7 step 5
 - Special event permit application from Brewery at Four Star Farm Fireworks Viewing 9/30
 - Chris Sellers explained the permit was requested due to a large amount of traffic and parking expected after the 350th Anniversary parade and policing detail needed
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to approve the special permit from The Brewery at Four Star Farm for fireworks viewing in conjunction with the 350th Anniversary celebration and waive the fee
- **Citizens’ Concerns (limit 3 minutes per speaker)**
 - Sarah Kerns, 39 Highland Ave: concerned about out of lane action by employee per conversation with outside sources, including a state employee and the Grant Development Director, on the topic of special town meetings. Claims the Town Administrator told the state employee there would be a special town meeting in the fall, verified by the Grant Development Director, then told someone else the special town meeting would be in May. Stated that as the Select Board, we are not doing our job. Feels there is a blur in the lines of the jobs between Select Board and Town Administrator. Concern is, before things are communicated to the state, they need to go through proper channels, in particular special town meetings, as a quorum of the Select Board
- **Review and Approval of Warrants**
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to approve the 9/6/23 Payroll warrant of \$68,338.28
 - Motion by Cummings, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to approve the 9/6/23 Vendor warrant of \$403,747.05. Kerns abstained
 - Discussion: Kerns asked about additional time to review the vendor warrant. Llamas advised the warrant was available at 4:00 pm for review
- **Review and Approval of Minutes**
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to approve the minutes of 8/22/23 as written. Jacque abstained
 - Request from Kerns to amend 5/16/23 minutes-tabled
- **Meetings/Events attended by Selectboard members**
 - Jacque: Historical Commission; Police candidate interview; Franklin Regional Council of Government (FRCOG) Finance Committee
 - Meisner: Police candidate interview
 - Kerns: as a member of the Conservation Commission, a walk on conservation land with the State representative, Grant Development Director; Sewer Commission; Economic Development Advisory

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- **Town Administrator's update**

- Grants:
 - Federal Emergency Management Agency – Assistance to Firefighters Grant Award –
 - Received \$120,671 in this grant with 5% match of town budgeted funds for purchase of 21 Self Contained Breathing Apparatus (SCBA) units and 2 Rapid Intervention Team (RIT) rescue packs
 - Obtained by Grant Development Director Mallory Sullivan
 - Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA) Grant – Town Hall Bathrooms in development
 - Sullivan designed specs that Highway Superintendent Tom Walker put out to several construction vendors
 - Awaiting pricing to complete the grant due on the 9/15
 - Multiple items in the women's bathroom were mentioned in the ADA transition plan, including the size of the handicap stall.
 - Submitting the grant application to get the bathrooms updated
 - United States Department of Transportation – Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Grant
 - Federal Grant Sullivan is working on with MassDOT, who will still be the applicant, and WSP the engineers for the Schell Bridge project.
 - This grant is more in line with the scope
 - There is a quick turnaround so Sullivan is working with the engineers to update the narrative and other requirements, including letters of support.
 - Community Compact (2022 Grant) – Budget Document
 - After checking out a couple of options, Llamas reached out to the Collins Center at UMass Boston
 - Looking to create a document that combines budget information with Town Department reports/goals
 - This would be a document that shows budget information and provides a format for Town Departments to talk about their accomplished goals/work and their plans for the next coming year
 - Will start work on this with Departments in October beginning the budget process for next year
 - It will require a bit more work for departments to start setting goals and objectives, but will be easier each year following the model
 - The Select Board already did goal setting for last year and have a new meeting scheduled on 9/26 to review and set goals for next year, making it less difficult
- Pioneer Valley Regional School District Master Planning Process
 - Llamas attended the first meeting as the representative from Northfield.
 - August 9th was a meeting to look at the District currently, to address goals and objectives and to give the consultants some information to start planning
 - The second meeting is a Community Forum is September 18th. This is a listening session for community voices. It will be from 5:30 - 7:30. No location announced to date
 - To be posted on the School District Website and Town website when announced.
- 350th Parade
 - Confirmation emails have gone out to participants, approximately 85-90 entries
 - looking for volunteers to help the day before (9/29) with set up, and the day of (9/30) for help running. Contact Llamas to be put in touch with the volunteer coordinator, or go on the 350th website to sign up to volunteer

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- Postcards will be going out to residents in the Highland Rd area advising the parade will be using a full lane of travel on Pine and Highland for set up from about 11:00 am until the parade starts at 1:00 and until it ends
- There will be stands and emcee Nathan L'Etoile in front of the Bible Church and Elementary School
- There is going to be a Craft Fair in the parking lot across from the IGA starting around 10:00 a.m.
- State representatives Neal, Whipps and Senator Comerford are included

• Business

- Economic Development Advisory Committee (EDAC) Composition
 - Discussion to remove Grant Development Director Mallory Sullivan as an appointed member of the Economic Development Advisory Committee
 - Sullivan is not eligible to be a member per town bylaw so the Select Board needs to remove her appointment to correct
 - Sullivan will continue as a liaison with the EDAC
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to remove Mallory Sullivan's appointment from the Economic Development Advisory because she is not a registered voter in Northfield
- Electronic Communication Policy
 - Llamas passed out and reviewed her proposed changes to the current policy to promote clarity and remove the request to provide the Town Secretary with the email account password, citing the information technology (IT) service can access and change the password when needed.
 - The changes are to be compliant with Public Records Requests per Massachusetts General Law
 - Discussion on individual usage of town email as representation of the town. Kerns asked if the lawyer had reviewed feeling part of it was questionable. Kerns requested the item be tabled as the Select Board did not have this information prior to the meeting and cited "any external communications from board members received by the public must be cc'd to..." as needing more guidance. Llamas explained if a member is receiving town business in their personal email it should be cc'd to the town email. Kerns felt it needed more context.
 - Cummings explained the request for the policy update from experience as police officer using private email to conduct sensitive town business and how that account became subject to public record. With the current IT structure there should be no reason to use personal email to conduct town business as it is the price of doing business.
 - Llamas suggested the wording "anything received by the public for town business must be cc'd and answered to..."
 - Jacque added the policy is for the personal benefit of not having personal equipment be subject to public record requests
 - Kerns has had issues and set up a Gmail account that is fully discoverable, due to a problem with Outlook software on her computer. Discussion on alternate online sites to access the town account.
 - Cummings referenced the policy from the town of Townsend. Jacque in general found the Townsend policy clear except for the section under discipline which sounded like a personnel policy item.
 - Kerns would like access to print when in the office. Non-town equipment cannot be connected to the network due to security.
 - Cummings asked about ways to connect. Llamas to inquire from the IT service
 - Electronic Communication Policy further discussion to be addressed in a future meeting
- Signs for Elections
 - Signage needed to announce town meetings and elections. Kerns suggested a flag with "voting today" for the front of Town Hall to draw attention and additional signage to announce upcoming town meetings and elections

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- Discussion on storage issues, breakage and complaints the current signs lettering is too small. A more permanent solution needed.
- Jacque suggested a Select Board policy and to have the Town Clerk come in for discussion on who will be responsible for the setting up the sign.
- Lack of storage and wearing of the equipment discussed. Llamas suggested finding a more permanent solution that was weather resistant.
- Kerns restated signage is needed before the next town meeting and vote.
- Jacque concurred and suggested putting on the list of future Select Board agenda to figure out storage and cost.
- Kerns asserts wear and tear/replacement every few years are common business/town expenditures
- Sign letter of support for US Department of Transportation Reconnecting Neighborhoods and Communities Grant
 - Letter of support to request funding for the Pauchaug-Schell Greenway Project highlighting Community Reconnection, State of Repair and Safety, Economic Opportunity, and Recreation Impacts
 - Motion by Jacque, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to sign the letter of support on behalf of the Town of Northfield for the Massachusetts Department of Transportation's request for funding from the US Department of Transportation's Reconnecting Communities and Neighborhoods Program to fund construction of the Pauchaug-Schell Greenway Project
- **Committee/Board Appointments**
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to appoint Dan Campbell as an Election Officer; term expires 8/15/24
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Jacque the Select Board voted to appoint re-appoint Bruce Kahn as an Election Officer; term expires 8/15/24
 - Motion by Boudreau, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to appoint re-appoint Dan Campbell to Board of Registrars; term expires 8/15/26
- **Proposed Agenda Items-** additional topics for the ongoing the list
 - Alex Pirozhkov's resignation letter
 - Police Department policy
 - Electronic communications and printer accessibility at Town Hall
 - Signage for town elections and town meetings
 - Americans with Disabilities Act for voting at town meeting
 - Earlier Vendor warrant availability
- **Announcements**
 - Volunteers for the 350th Anniversary Celebration parade needed
- **Recognition for Service**
 - Congratulations to Alex Pirozhkov on his acceptance to the State Police Academy and appreciation for his service to the town
- Motion by Meisner, seconded by Cummings the Select Board voted to adjourn at 7:20 pm

Recorded by Sandra L. Wood, Secretary

Select Board Clerk

11/7/23
Date Approved